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Inside Information

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TWO USDA INFORMATION OFFICES TO CLOSE

The Dallas and New York regional information offices, administered by USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service and predecessor agencies for nearly 40 years, are scheduled to be closed in March.

Their functions will be transferred to the three remaining offices in Atlanta, Chicago and San Francisco.

The five offices were serving six USDA marketing and inspection agencies with regional information services last fiscal year.

The three remaining offices will provide services only for the Agricultural Marketing Service and the Animal & Plant Health Inspection Service after March.

The Federal Grain Inspection Service, Office of Transportation and the Packers & Stockyards Administration withdrew support from the regional information offices prior to the end of 1981.

The Food Safety & Inspection Service, the second largest supporter and user of the offices' services, is withdrawing its fiscal and personnel support in March.

The five regional information offices have been an institution with USDA since World War II, when they served the War Food Administration.

Although currently administered by the Agricultural Marketing Service, the offices once served the Production & Marketing Administration in the late 1940s and 1950s, and the Consumer & Marketing Service in the 1960s.

The five offices also served the Food & Nutrition Service's programs for a number of years, and for a long time the Economic Research Service and Statistical Reporting Service (when those agencies' programs were administered by AMS).

The regional information offices sometimes were called upon to serve the entire department during emergency and other special situations, and often served Secretaries of Agriculture and other top executives of the department in setting up news conferences in the field.

Secretary of Agriculture Bob Bergland's plans to transfer the offices to departmental administration and service were suspended in 1980.

The Dallas staff is headed by Harold C. Bryson. Others on the staff are public affairs specialists Dennis Shimkoski and Karen Warlick, and Margaret Apperson, secretary, and Camelia Lopez, clerk-typist.

The New York staff is headed by Bryan Killikelly. Others on the staff are public affairs specialists Werner Hietsch and Susan Sperling, and Kay Kocoris, secretary, Xiomara Caminero, clerk-typist and Janice Leon, student aide.

SAFE HANDLING TIPS GET WIDESPREAD USE

The latest campaign by Bryan Killikelly, USDA northeast regional information director at New York, which seeks the cooperation of the private sector in assuming the cost of reproducing and distributing "Safe Handling Tips for Meat and Poultry" publication of USDA's Food Safety & Inspection Service, got a major shot in the arm recently.

Group vice president for Stop & Shop Supermarkets in Boston, sent Killikelly a copy of the chain's January 11 "Consumerisms" which included the USDA safe handling tips message. The store official said that 370,000 copies of the chain's publication are distributed through the company's 151 stores throughout the New England area every two weeks.

In addition, Killikelly received word from the New Orleans Public Service company that it has distributed 200,000 copies with its monthly billing to customers. And, the advertising manager for Randall Food Markets, of Houston, Tex., advised that they reproduced 10,000 copies of the USDA publication for distribution through their 19 stores.

These three latest additions boost the total private industry reproduction figure to a phenomenal 1,470,240 copies of the USDA publication!

If USDA's Food Safety & Inspection Service had reproduced and individually distributed this same number of publications, the cost (based on a conservative 25 cents a copy) would have cost about \$370,000. That figure far exceeds the annual operating budget of the New York regional information office.

REGIONAL INFORMATION CHIEF HOSPITALIZED

Bryan Killikelly, director of the New York regional information office administered by USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service, has been hospitalized due to a serious illness.

Those wishing to send messages may address them to his home at 175-39 Dalny Road, Apt. 4-G, Jamaica Estates, NY 11432.

Werner Hietsch is acting regional director during Killikelly's absence.

"VOICE" TO TELL AGRICULTURAL STORY

To satisfy a growing interest in China about the American system of agricultural production and food distribution, the Voice of America (VOA) is developing an extended series of radio programs that will delve into the hows, whys and wherefores of the U.S. food scene.

Larry B. Marton, public affairs specialist with the Special Programs Center in USDA's Office of Governmental & Public Affairs, is helping VOA structure the project and provide advice as to content.

A number of USDA experts, as well as private sector representatives, will appear on the programs.

Marton says there will be ten to thirteen 15- to 30-minute programs--the most extensive undertaking devoted to agriculture by VOA in some time.

The project will include such topics as "Farming, the Largest American Industry," "How the American Farm Has Influenced the Food Industry," "A Visit to an American Supermarket," "The Role of the American Government in Food Production and Distribution," "The Farmer as a Producer and a Consumer," and "American Agriculture and International Markets."

Although the project is aimed at the vast audience in China, it will be heard in other parts of the world as well.

FOUR ORGANIZATIONS ENDORSE "CONGRESS"

Four agricultural communicators' organizations have already endorsed or tentatively endorsed plans for the first Congress of Agricultural Communicators, being planned for mid-1984 in Washington, D.C.

The two organizations which have endorsed the plan are the Agricultural Relations Council and the American Agricultural Editors Association.

Two organizations have tentatively endorsed the proposal, with final endorsement to come from their membership. They are the National Association of Farm Broadcasters and the Agricultural Communicators in Education.

Don Collins, past president of the ARC and an active associate member of ACE, is leading the planning for the Congress.

He can be reached at: Don Collins, Vice President, Communications, The Fertilizer Institute, 1015 - 18th Street, NW, Washington, DC 20036; or call (202) 861-4900.

FARM PUBLISHER REVEALS SECRET

When he thought farm magazines were starting to bore readers, Wisconsin-based publisher Roy Reiman began publishing periodicals written almost entirely by their readers. They have been a hit with the various farm audiences.

FARM WIFE NEWS, a monthly devoted to rural women, was started in 1970. It now has a circulation of more than 375,000, which puts it ahead of some well-known publications.

FARM & RANCH LIVING and COUNTRY PEOPLE have been introduced by Reiman Publications since, and relying on the same formula as FARM WIFE NEWS, have also proven to be successful farm publications.

None of the publications carry any advertising. They are written almost entirely by the readers.

Now Reiman is gambling that rural subscribers will support a fourth, bimonthly publication, FARM LETTERS, made up entirely of reader correspondence.

He said he gets so much good mail that he could print 8 to 16 pages of really good letters in each issue of each of his three magazines. So, he's going to use them in his newest publication.

Reiman Publications is located in Greendale, a suburb of Milwaukee, Wis.

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT APPLAUDED

"No single statute has ever given the citizens of a democracy a better window on their government" as has the federal Freedom of Information Act.

So said Katherine Graham of the WASHINGTON POST at the recent national convention of the Society of Professional Journalists in Washington, D.C.

FARM WOMEN MEETING IN WASHINGTON, D.C.

About 100 farm women from some 40 states are registered for USDA's second annual "Farm Women's Forum," being held in Washington, D.C., Feb. 7-9.

The participants will discuss marketing strategies for increased profits, and get practical information on marketing factors, influences and strategies.

Top government and industry officials are included on the program. At one session, a panel of officers of boards of trade, cooperative marketing associations, and commodity brokers will discuss various types of marketing methods and how to use them.

WESTERN VIDEOTAPE PRODUCTIONS SHARED

A recent survey of western land grant universities resulted in some important discoveries about instructional videotape productions.

Scott Fedale, associate agricultural editor at the College of Agriculture, University of Idaho, led a committee which looked into the potential for exchanging information about videotape production in the western region.

First, the committee had to determine what was being done in the area of instructional videotape productions and whether or not stock footage files were being maintained by any institutions.

Purpose was to help each university find out what instructional videotape productions were being worked on by counterparts and to see whether these programs were applicable in their own states.

Another purpose was to help those who needed some particular footage, perhaps some footage they could not get locally, to see whether or not some other state had this footage and could make it available, thus saving the cost of producing their own footage.

What the committee found, according to Fedale, was that only three western universities maintain any sort of stock footage file.

Eight have catalogs or listings of instructional videotape programs-- Alaska, Arizona, California, Idaho, Montana, New Mexico, Oregon and Utah.

Five said they are involved in ongoing productions; four furnished details: --Arizona just completed an 8-program series on information systems for the clothing and daily needs of handicapped people; a series on home buying for the first time buyer; and a 7-program series on home food preservation.

--Idaho had one production completed and one in progress on baby swine management; a 12-part series on trimming tailoring time in progress; one on bull evaluation and management in progress; and one on yellow star thistle in progress.

--Montana had a production in progress on biological weed control.

--Oregon just completed a program series on food preservation.

From this initial exchange of information, some immediate benefits have already resulted in that a couple of states became aware of productions that others were involved in which proved useful in their own states, thus saving them production time and money.

"What is needed is a way for all the electronic media specialists to stay in touch with what is going on in their neighboring states," Fedale said.

"There's some talk of establishing a microcomputer network on which we could 'bulletin board' current activities, needs, upcoming projects, etc."

Fedale suggests that much more of this type of exchange needs to take place in light of the shrinking budgets confronting many land grant universities and USDA.

"If we can avoid reinventing the wheel and make use of what some of our counterparts are doing, we should find that we have more time, and dollars, to do some of the other things we need to do," Fedale said.

Fedale can be reached in Radio-TV Services, Department of Agricultural Information, University of Idaho, Moscow, ID 83843; or call (208) 885-6436.